

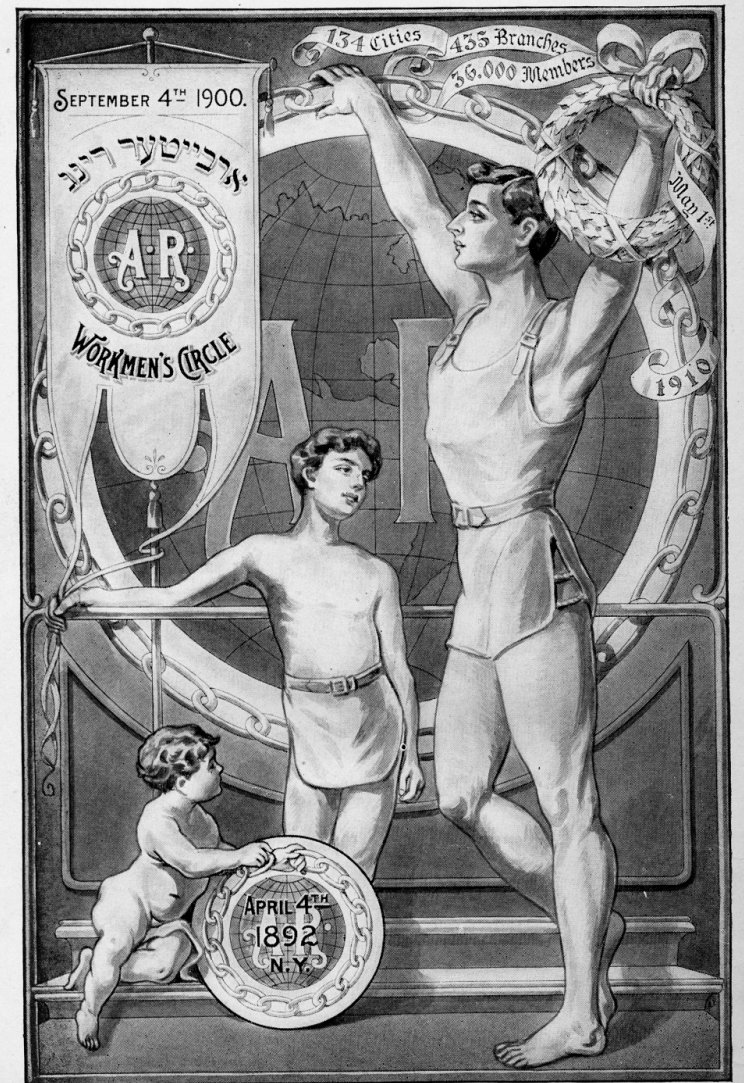
**Proposal for the naming of**  
**“Julius Levitt Square”**

**Adjacent to the former Vladeck Center at 126 N. St. Louis Street**



Julius Levitt  
1885-1953

In June 1934, the world looked very different than it does today: the Great Depression was approaching its fifth year, Germany had installed Adolf Hitler as its chancellor the year before, and most eastern European Jews in the United States lived in ethnic enclaves stretching from New York's Lower East Side to the Boyle Heights district of Los Angeles.



פער אייניגונג.

## The Beginning of the Jewish Labor Committee



Four months earlier, one thousand mostly immigrant Jewish activists had gathered at the Lower East Side's Central Plaza. In Yiddish and broken English they protested Hitler's rise to power and voted to form a new organization — the Jewish Labor Committee.

The JLC selected visionary leaders as officers. Baruch Charney Vladeck, general manager of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, accepted the post as president and David Dubinsky, president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU), was named treasurer. Joseph Baskin and Benjamin Gebiner, from the Workmen's Circle, the largest American Jewish fraternal organization, became secretary and executive secretary, respectively.



The organization of organizations dedicated itself to working within the labor movement and the larger Jewish community to raise the alarm against Nazism. This concern about overseas events and the instinctive reliance on their unions and fraternal groups as sources of organizational strength was part of a long political tradition. It reflected shared values and common roots in the General Union of Jewish Workers of Russia, Poland, and Lithuania (or Jewish Labor Bund).

This underground organization — committed to socialism, unionism, and Jewish culture — represented a powerful force in the Jewish communities of these countries. Personal relationships and shared experiences (such as time in the Czar's prisons) reinforced organizational and ideological bonds.



Front page from Yiddish newspaper, *Der Groyser Kudes* (*The Big Stick*).

## The expansion of the Jewish Labor Committee in California



In part due to serendipity, California was one of the first states to have functioning JLC chapters, despite its geographic distance from New York and relatively small Jewish community (roughly a hundred thousand) in the state. Working through Dubinsky, who had recently been appointed to the AFL Executive Council, the group arranged for Vladeck to address the October 1934 AFL convention in San Francisco.

Following the convention, Vladeck and Citrine boarded a train for Los Angeles. On Sunday, October 14, 1934, 6,500 workers — Jewish and non-Jewish — came together at the Shrine Auditorium to learn about developments in Europe. Vladeck helped put a Jewish imprint on the event while Citrine's first-hand experiences and role as the most prominent trade unionist in the world helped frame the anti-Nazi cause as an international struggle against evil.





The Jewish Labor Committee of Los Angeles began to function as a distinct organization in early 1935 under the leadership of Julius Levitt, west coast *Jewish Daily Forward* manager who then became head of the Southern California Chapter in Boyle Heights, California. Due to the outreach of the Jewish Labor Committee, numerous broad-based coalitions were formed with other minority groups such as the (NAACP, the Mexican American-oriented Community Services Organization, Japanese American Citizens League), the faith community, and organized labor.



During this time, Julius Levitt sent fellow activist Fred Ross to set up the Community Service Organization (CSO) down the street at Chicago & 1st (what is now a field office for Council District 14) two years previous. The JLC work, along with CSO work in the coming decades, with United Farmer Workers under the leadership of Cesar Chavez would come into the national spotlight. Brooklyn Avenue, just the first major street north of the Vladeck Center would be renamed in Cesar Chavez's honor in mid 1990's



## Examples of Public Square Signage





## Public Square Signage Process

- 1) Propose name at Planning and Land Use Committee Meeting
- 2) Submit proposal to Neighborhood Council General Board Meeting
- 3) If approved by NC, the request will be submitted to CD-14 to ask for a council motion.
- 4) If motion is granted, LADOT will provide signage and date of installation





*Together, we can forge a new day - good  
fortune, happiness, a livelihood and good  
health for all!*